

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL MUNICH

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO MOSCOW PRAGUE WARSAW
BUCHAREST VIENNA SOFIA BERLIN MARCH 17, FROM BUDAPEST
REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUDAPEST 0641

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, HU, PDCV

SUBJECT: DISTURBANCES FOLLOWING PETOFI DAY COMMEMORATION

1. IN A BRIEF COMMUNIQUE MARCH 17 HUNGARIAN PRESS AGENCY MTI
HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT " SEVERAL HUNDRED IRRESPONSIBLE PERSONS
ATTEMPTED TO STAGE A NATIONALIST DEMONSTRATION IN CENTRAL
BUDAPEST" FOLLOWING PETOFI DAY COMMERATION ON MARCH 15 OF 125 TH
ANNIVERSARY OF HUNGARY' S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE. ACCORDING TO NTI
DEMONSTRATORS WERE DISPERSED QUICKLY BY POLICE AND 41 PERSONS
WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. THREE SENTENCE STORY APPEARS ON
FRONT PAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY NEWS AND IN MID PAGES OF
LEADING HUNGARIAN DAILIES. IN ADDITION, DEMONSTRATION WAS ALSO
REPORTED ON TELEVISION EVENING NEWS MARCH 16.

2. DEMONSTRATIONS BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN BUDAPEST ON PETOFI DAY HAVE
BECOME SOMETHING OF A RITE OF SPRING IN RECENT YEARS AND THIS ONE
NOT TOTALLY UNEXPECTED. WHAT STRIKES US AS UNUSUAL, AND TO BEST
OF OUR MEMORY UNPRECEDENTED, IS FACT THAT A DISTURBANCE OF THIS
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TYPE WAS QUICKLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE GOH AND
EVEN GIVEN TELEVISION COVERAGE. THIS QUICK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
SEEMS TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO DOWNPLAY DEMONSTRATION BY ATTRIBUTING
IT TO ANTICS OF YOUTHFUL HOOLIGAN ELEMENTS THEREBY HOPEFULLY
AVOIDING CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION DAMAGING TO GOH IMAGE WHICH
APPEARED IN WESTERN PRESS FOLLOWING DISORDERS OF LAST YEAR.
PUHAN UNQUOTE ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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